

**- Hall Wants to Force Oil Companies to Drill on Already Leased Land -
- 68 Million Acres Available but Unused for Energy -**

Washington, DC – U.S. Rep. John Hall (D-NY19) today announced his support for legislation that would help lower gas prices by forcing oil companies to either produce from the public lands that are already leased to them or give up these federal leases. Currently, 68 million acres of federal land that has been leased to oil companies is sitting idle and unused for oil and gas development.

"Big Oil is stockpiling these leases to pad their already out of control profits," said Hall. "Drilling on the land they already have available could double U.S. oil production and cut foreign oil imports by a third."

H.R. 6251, the Responsible Federal Oil and Gas Lease Act, would ban oil companies from obtaining any more leases unless they are developing on the leases they already hold. Similar rules already in place on the coal industry have proven to be effective.

Energy companies are currently not producing oil or gas on the 68 million acres of federal land already under their control. Of the 47.5 million acres of federal lands leased onshore by oil and gas companies, only about 13 million acres are actually producing oil and gas.

Offshore, only 10.5 million of the 44 million leased acres are currently producing oil or gas. These unused areas could produce an additional 4.8 million barrels of oil and 44.7 billion cubic feet of natural gas each day, nearly double current domestic oil production. That is more than six times the estimated potential peak production from the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) and would almost double total U.S. oil production.

"Before we start to think about drilling on new lands, oil companies need to develop the 68 millions of acres they already lease," said Hall. "Now is the time when Big Oil needs to take action to help American drivers, instead of sitting on its hands and refusing to responsibly drill for oil that could lower prices."

Over the last eight years, the number of drilling permits issued by the government has gone up by 361%. Three-quarters of the oil in the U.S. is on land already open for production, but less than one-third of that land is actually being used by the oil companies.